

# Ballymun Concrete News

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## Latest Newsletter

### What Are Estate Forums? By: Seamus Kelly.

Estate forums are the key to the future success of the new Ballymun and they're going to be nobody's puppets. I believe they are major players in ensuring residents get a fair deal from Dublin Corporation and Ballymun Redevelopment Ltd (BRL) as part of the planning and future estate management of the proposed new town. With the five forums set up to cover the whole of Ballymun, every legal resident living in houses and flats in Ballymun/ Poppintree area complex are represented by their own particular forum.

On the initiative of the Ballymun housing task force in co-operation with Dublin Corporation and the Ballymun Partnership and through local democratic elections, estate forums became a reality. Five forums were set up in each of the areas: Balcurris/Balbutcher, Silloge/Sandyhill, Coutry, Shangan, and Poppintree and carry a mandate from the residents who voted for them.

Being a member myself of the Balcurris/Balbutcher forum, I believe the first responsibility of it's members is to the residents in their area. Secondly, to work within the bounds of the forums own constitution worded and put together by the members themselves. This is what makes the forums unique, 'their independence'. According to City Manager Mr John Fitzgerald who launched several of the forums, "not only will the forums retain their independence, but can be a bedrock of good estate management practice for the future". (extract from BRL Newsletter November 97.) While the forums co-operate with Dublin Corporation and other bodies in the development of Ballymun, the interests and concerns of residents, I believe, comes first.

Dublin Corporation are first to admit they made mistakes in the past and now

want to put them right. There is a need for all parties concerned to put their differences aside and work together in the best interests of Ballymun. The forums have representatives on the Drugs Task Force, Housing task Force, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd Board just to mention a few.

This representation is not only in name but also by participating in some of the major decision making issues concerning residents in the Ballymun/ Poppintree area. Forum members live in flats and houses like any other Ballymun or Poppintree resident. We know from the same experiences as yourselves the everyday problems in Ballymun. We recognise the frustrations of trying to cut through red tape to get things done. Well the forums, I believe, are the best opportunity we're going to get to turn things around with the residents support. It is up to the forums to see that they are not afraid to challenge and be challenged.

If anyone feel the forums are doing nothing at all but just attending a few meetings let me give you a few facts. Recently they met with An Taoiseach Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D. also two Government Ministers and outlined the needs for private development and new jobs for Ballymun people. This is a major step forward in getting tax designation status to encourage new Industry into an area which has been neglected by government for too long.

For a number of us this is a new experience dealing with people at different levels. Politicians, councillors, managing directors, senior clerical officers, Gardai and many others. This is all part of the consultation process in planning the redevelopment and future

management of Ballymun and there's a lot more work to be done. We are not perfect, we cannot work miracles all we can promise is to do our very best as your forum elected representatives.

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